

THE WHITE

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REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT LUNCHEON FOR OUT-OF-TOWN EDITORS

The Cabinet Room

1:15 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: I am grateful to Joe Sterne for putting this group together, issuing the invitations and being so helpful to Karna in arranging this briefing.

And now that I've gotten the record straightened out here -- to recognize someone who's familiar with the locale. They keep me busy reading a lot of other things, but I still manage to keep up with the papers and the White House News Summary includes editorials from all of the papers that are represented here as well as others.

And I know that on the editorial page, usually, the cartoons run and there was one from a paper the other day that I was very happy to see because it was for all those people that want instant results for changes in something that have taken several decades to be installed here in government. I don't know how many carried it. It's this cartoon of the group, I'll pass it around the table so you can see it. And the radio reporter, so you'll be happy to know, or T.V. reporter, is saying, "And so it seems clear to this reporter that Reaganomics has failed, failed to thrive in a climate of optimism, failed to blossom into a viable economic alternative, failed to bear the fruit of prosperity, at least in these first five, disappointing minutes."

(Laughter).

Now, I think we should -- because it is a working lunch -- get to the questions and I said the other day when we had a briefing with some people from the Defense Department over here and I said that we will decide that etiquette does not prevail and speaking with your mouth full will be considered a military necessity (laughter).

MS. SMALL: Something else, Mr. President, this afternoon, as soon as they leave here, they will be meeting with David Stockman and with Secretary Drew Lewis on transportation issues and they will also be hearing from Secretary Schweiker from HHS, so, you know, if they ask you something really technical and, you know, they will be hearing from those people on those issues later on this afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: All right.

Q Mr. President, may I ask you a Virginia question? As you know, we have one of the two governors races, I think, in the country this year between Chuck Robb, otherwise known as "LBJ's son-in-law," and Marshall Coleman. Have you made specific plans to come into Virginia to campaign for Marshall?

THE PRESIDENT: I understand I am scheduled to -- I was scheduled there for a reception and it had to be cancelled because of a live broadcast. Yes, I am scheduled now for an appearance in his behalf.

MR. MEESE: I think it's week after next.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

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Q Do you know when it is exactly?

MR. MEESE: I think it's the 27th of October. That's my -- I believe.

Q Yes.

MR. MEESE: Yes. But, Karna, we could find out for sure. Is that right, Pete? Yes.

Q Is that in Tidewater?

MR. ROUSSEL: I don't know about the locations --

Q Mr. President, did you make any converts this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Usually, I've found out they don't tell you whether you have or not when they go out. They wait and you find out what they say to you people when they get outside whether they have or not.

And some of them, very honestly, are really undecided and have heard this and they want to take it back with everything else that they've heard on the other side and make their decision by themselves later.

So I don't press for that and every one of them, there are no wrinkles in his sleeve when he goes out (laughter).

Q You got 51 names on that little list you have in your pocket, I see?

THE PRESIDENT: I wish I did. I wish I had a list in my pocket.

I don't know. I'm confident. I think we're going to get it because there are a number of them that have expressed themselves that regardless of their own personal feelings, they are concerned about interfering with the foreign policy effort that we're putting forth because we see this as very definitely a part of our ability to help in the peace-making process over there in the Middle East, that the Saudi Arabians are very key to this. And we've had their help already, and so on, in things that lead us to believe that going forward at this and establishing this kind of a relationship with them will bear fruit.

Q Another Middle East question, sir. I see President Eisenhower's picture hanging in here and I was in the Middle East last year for a newspaper and talked to a lot of people, including a lot of Palestinian Arabs and they would often say that, "We remember Mr. Eisenhower with fondness. He seemed to understand the Arab cause."

We have the Palestinian problem in the news again with the comments by Presidents Carter and Ford, the autonomy talks are starting up again soon.

Just interested in your general view of the Palestinian question. Do you think that these are people with a legitimate grievance? Is it something that goes back to the late '40's and the founding of Israel? How do you see that problem?

THE PRESIDENT: I think wherever it may come from, you've got 1-1/2 million people who are living there as homeless and refugees. I don't mean homeless in the sense of no shelter. That's being taken care of. But I think that problem -- they have to be a part of the problem. And as those two gentlemen said, one of the keys is that

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that doesn't make as much sense as it does in any state in the Union and that is called the President's budget. But about 80 percent of it is mandated on the President by actions of Congress. And then the President sends over a suggested budget and the Congress with no regard for what the estimated revenues are going to be in the coming year, does whatever they want to do to it, and again, the President doesn't have line item. He has to accept the whole budget or none at all.

And let me just cite what seems to me to make sense. As Governor of California is was called the Governor's budget. Every year a group of experts from the private sector and government met and estimated the revenues. And over 25 years of this custom in California, that group never missed by more than one percent their estimate of what the revenues would be in the coming year and then that one percent was on estimating them too low. Never did they go overboard and say, "Oh, we're going to have a lot more money than we ended up having."

Then the Governor, with all the requests from the various departments coming in, programs from the Congress, the Governor worked up the budget with his people and submitted it to the legislature. The legislature could take out anything they wanted to take out and the Governor could not put it back in, but by the same token, the legislature could put in things and the Governor could veto those things out, line item. Then it went back and the Congress, if they could get a two-thirds vote to override the veto, could put them back in, so that you had a double control working back and forth between Congress or the legislature and the Governor.

And the system, why something of that kind couldn't work -- I suggested it to Tip O'Neill when I first came here and he acted as if I was threatening the very province of Congress and taking away all their rights. Well, all their rights have given us a \$1 trillion deficit. Now, why couldn't such a system of that kind at the federal level be just as effective as it is as the state level. All the state of California is ten percent of the population of the nation.

But when you say that, yes, I think there should be some method of checking. There is no restraint on Congress passing any spending program they want. I could veto that program, but how many of the spending items are hung on as amendments to a bill that you can't veto? And some of the things that have been performed in the past of hanging an amendment on, let's say, the Social Security payments -- that's so far fetched an example, it didn't, but I mean like a Welfare program is very essential. And you can't veto the amendment and you can't say no and suddenly shut off the Welfare checks.

MS. SMALL: I just want to make one comment. The President hasn't had an opportunity to eat his lunch yet and I thought if anybody had a question, maybe just direct at Mr. Meese just for a moment to give the President an opportunity to eat.

Q I can direct this question to Mr. Meese, as well, and perhaps if the President disagrees he can say so. The President campaigned on a platform of getting the government off the backs of people and yet we find the administration trying to make it more difficult to get information out of the government on the Freedom of Information Act. There are proposals advocated by the administration for preventive detention and for modifying the exclusionary rule to make it possible for government agents to break the law and to have their evidence admitted. There's talk about the change in the Executive Order governing the CIA to enlarge the CIA's area of activity in domestic matters.

Now, does this seem to you a contradiction to this pledge to get the government off the backs of people?

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MR. MEESE: I'm sure the President would answer it much better than I would. Let me just say, first of all, a lot of the premises that you state are incorrect. We have actually gotten government off of the backs of people amazingly well in just the first ten months. For example, on regulations, the regulatory reform package I guess can best be summed up by looking at the Federal Register, which is about a third less the number of pages just because there are less than half as many proposed regulations this year than there were at this time a year ago.

So that in terms, the kinds of regulations that are imposed upon individuals, labor, and management, business and industry, we think we've made major strides in that regard.

Now, on the specifics you're talking about, the Freedom of Information Act I think most people who have examined it would agree, that can use some reform. We have -- it has actually imposed a tax burden upon the public and it's been misused by a lot of people. You take a person like Philip Agee, the renegade ex-CIA person, it's cost the Government \$500,000 to provide information to him under the Freedom of Information Act which he then uses against our country. And I don't think this is what was intended by those of you, and I suspect most of you supported the Freedom of Information Act, and I don't think it's what was intended by Congress. So it's the reforms in this direction.

As a matter of fact, some of the reforms were designed to make it easier for the news media to obtain information and I think there's a great interest -- I don't know whether John Rose has talked with you yet?

Q Yes, sir.

MR. MEESE: But I think there's a great interest in working out with responsible members of the news media any problems that you have with the proposed reforms. That's one item.

Let's talk about the CIA. That's easy. There is absolutely nothing in the proposed intelligence order which will expand the ability of the CIA to engage in domestic spying. That is totally false and it's propaganda being put out by some staffers on the Hill who were part of Frank Church's infamous intelligence committee that was so destructive of our intelligence authorities some years ago.

I think the preventive detention, which is a name put upon the bail provision -- the Constitution provides that bail shall be reasonable. What we're suggesting, what the Attorney General's task force has brought up, is that there would be a reasonable standard of bail. Now, we think that -- take a person who has proved, by committing another crime while out on bail for a first crime, that they should be let out on bail again and again, we don't think that's reasonable. So we're looking for some modifications of bail, to look for protection of society, along with the ability of people to get out prior to their trial.

And finally, on the exclusionary rule, I don't think anybody who has studied the exclusionary rule would believe that that's been beneficial to society. It does not allow for illegal acts by forces. What it does is, it provides a good faith rule. Many times a police officer has to make a decision in 30 seconds, or at least, in five minutes at the most, on whether he will make the search, or a stopping, something like that, and he does it under all the applicable law at that time. Two years later, by a four-to-three decision in a state court or a five-to-four decision of the United States Supreme Court, they decide that he was wrong and they change the law. And it applies retroactively to what that officer did. So what we're suggesting is a rule of reason be established to say that the officer

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